INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING IN EMERGENCIES

IYCF-E Assessment Guide

ORIENTATION

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

IFE CORE GROUP

Global NUTRITION CLUSTER

Introduction

Why was this guidance created?

- **Need for recognized thresholds** for IYCF indicators or standard IYCF-E indicators
- **No standard methodology** of IYCF-E assessment such as SMART, SQUEAC, etc. that can be followed easily
- **No harmonized sampling** methodology for IYCF–E assessments
- **Challenges around SMART including IYCF-E indicators** in standard surveys due to sample size
- **Need for guidance** around adapting surveys based on households
- **Need for guidelines which consider population movement** and instability in the areas

What is the aim of the guidance?

PURPOSE

To streamline the collection, analysis and interpretation of data on IYCF practices for decision-making purposes at sub-national/local level in humanitarian and fragile contexts.

AIM

To develop an easy-to-use guide to a standardized methodology for IYCF-E assessments, so the nutrition sector and implementing partners can better understand the nutritional status and needs of targeted communities.

This includes:

- Selecting the most appropriate IYCF-E assessment methodology.
- Identifying appropriate indicators.
- Adapting assessments to the context.

Who is the guide for? Target Audience

Group 1

Strong background in assessments and data analysis. Survey managers and NIS leads

Group 2

Some background in assessments and data analysis Health and nutrition advisors, IYCF-E advisors, technical assistance providers who directly support the nutrition and health emergency and the IYCF-E response and deciding on assessment types

Group 3

Limited, no background in assessments and data analysis. Decision-makers, humanitarian coordination team (HCT) members, humanitarian organizations contributing to coordinated assessments, policymakers and donors, as well as local and national authorities including national survey organizations

What does the guide contain?

Introduction

How to use this guide?

Module 1 Secondary Data Analysis

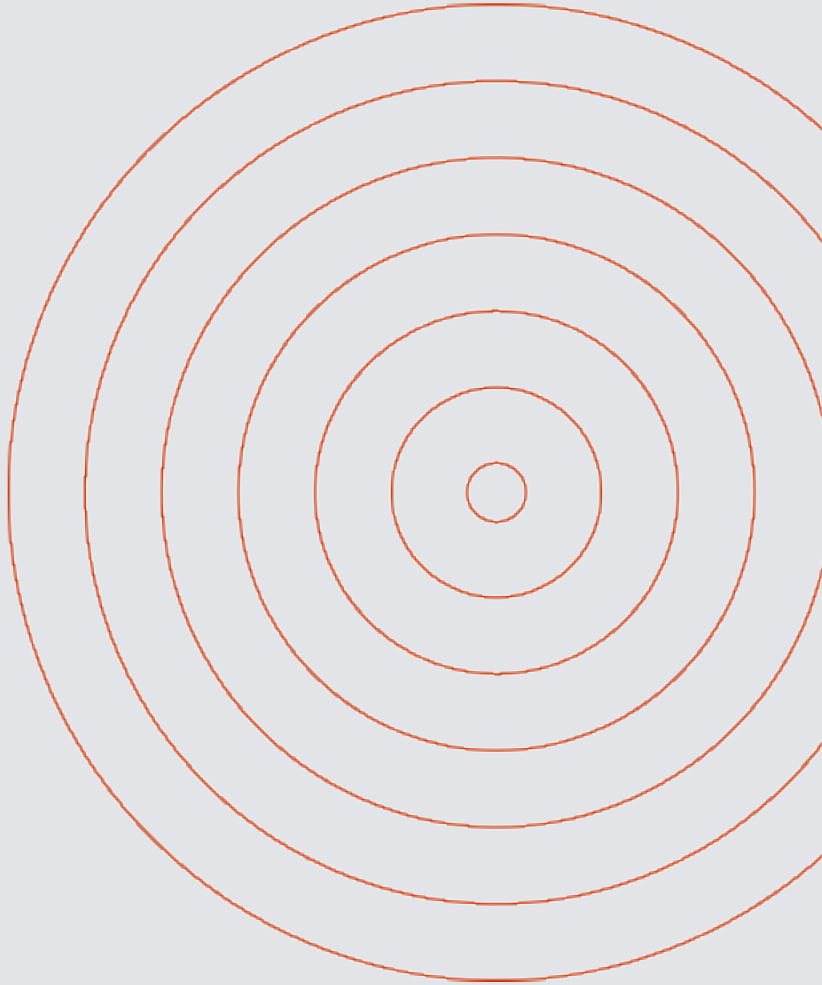
Module 2 Rapid Assessment

Module 3 In-Depth Qualitative Assessments

Module 4 Quantitative Assessments

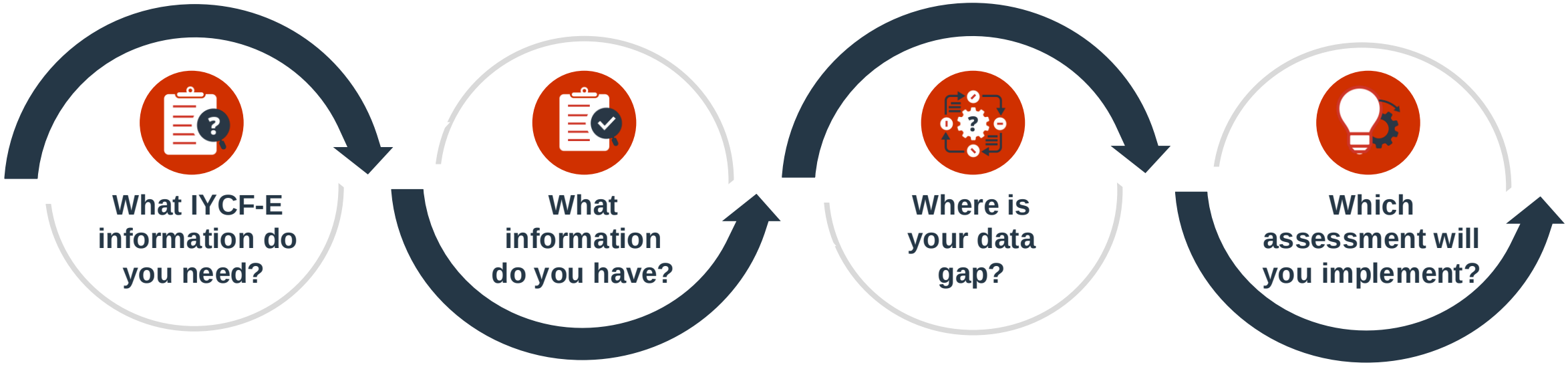
Module 5 Using Program Data to Assess and Monitor IYCF Practices

Module 6 Data to Decisions: Synthesizing and Analyzing Assessment Results



How to use this guide

How to choose an IYCF-E assessment methodology?



- Depending on your need, choose from the IYCF categories for further exploration
- Example: Coordination and policy, Assessment and Monitoring, Practices, Supplies, Integration with other sectors, etc. See categories on next slide

- Conduct a secondary data review, (see module 1, m.1)
- Identify areas with sufficient data based on the review and areas with data gaps

- Determine the information that is missing from the review
- Make certain that this information is genuinely essential for deciding the next steps.

- Determine the assessment method based on the data gap from the review
- Choose rapid assessment (m.2), qualitative (m.3) and/or quantitative (m.4) assessment based on data gap and context

Categories of information

Broad categories of IYCF data

General context	IYCF Status and Practices	IYCF Status and Practices	Maternal health and well-being	Policy Environment	IYCF Services and Capacity	Coordination
	Infants Under 6 Months	*IYCF in 6-23 Months Infants and Children*				

Key considerations in IYCF-E Assessments

Consideration	Action	Importance
Do No Harm	Assess potential risks to participants such as the time burden and cost of participation (such as travel cost). Avoid including vulnerable or minority individuals who may be re-traumatized or stigmatized as a result of the study.	Ensures the ethical integrity of the research by safeguarding. participants' physical and emotional well-being.
Obtaining Approval	Seek approval from local authorities, ethics boards, and community leaders before conducting the assessment.	Ensures that the assessment aligns with local legal and cultural expectations, protecting participants and researchers.
Confidentiality and Anonymity	Securely store all participant data in line with organizational and national policies. Where possible, avoid collecting personal information such as names. Where this is necessary, ensure that participants are aware of how their data will be used and that participant identities are protected in all documentation.	Maintains participant trust and protects them from potential harm or stigma, ensuring the integrity of the research.
Cultural Sensitivity	Train the assessment team on local cultural norms. Adapt research methods to respect cultural contexts.	Promotes respectful and relevant research that is more likely to be accepted and effective within the community.
Language Considerations	Use local languages in all communications. Employ translators familiar with cultural nuances.	Ensures that participants' views are accurately captured and understood, which is crucial for reliable data.
Reflexivity and Positionality	Encourage researchers to regularly reflect on their own identities and biases. Adjust methods to minimize bias.	Reduces researcher bias, leading to more objective and credible research outcomes.
Power Dynamics	Identify and address potential power imbalance among participants. Ensure diverse and inclusive participation.	Ensures that all voices are heard equally, leading to more inclusive and balanced research findings.
Privacy	Conduct interviews in private, interruption-free settings.	Protects participant dignity and encourages more honest and open sharing of information.

Discussion

- Participants share challenges they have faced in implementing IYCF-E assessments.
- Brief group discussion on overcoming these challenges.

Module 1

Secondary Data Analysis

What is secondary data analysis?

Definition
Secondary data analysis involves gathering, reviewing and interpreting information that has been collected by others.

In the context of IYCF-E, it means using existing data to understand feeding practices and the environment in which children and their caregivers are situated before conducting primary data collection.

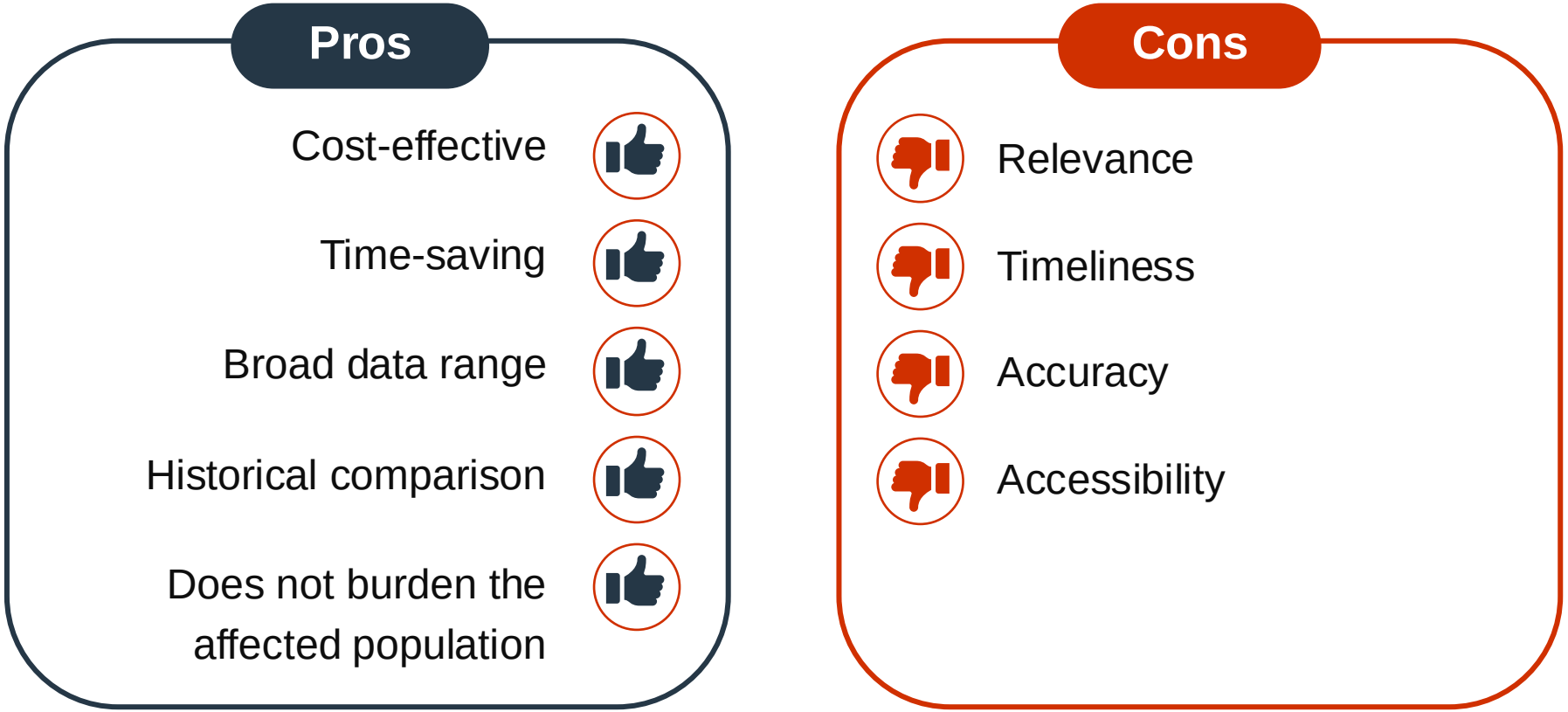
Key focus areas: Feeding practices, child nutrition and caregiver environments.

Data sources: Previous studies; surveys; and reports on nutrition, health, and emergencies.

Why is conducting a secondary data review critical for IYCF-E assessments?

- It supports informed decision-making, providing a baseline understanding for targeted interventions.
- It saves time and resources, allowing for rapid assessment when primary data collection is delayed or impractical.
- It helps identify gaps, guiding more focused primary data collection efforts.
- It offers contextual understanding of pre-crisis IYCF practices, providing a basis for comparison in emergencies.

Pros and Cons of Secondary Data Analysis



Ethical Considerations: Confidentiality, permission, transparency

What sort of information might we look for in secondary data analysis?

CONTEXT	USES
General context	Use existing census and health survey data to understand the household size and percentage of children under two years of age. Use situation reports and displacement databases and dashboards to understand the overall emergency context, including population displacement, living conditions and public health concerns. This helps to plan the IYCF-E response.
IYCF status and practices	Analyze pre-crisis indicators on breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices from household surveys to establish a baseline and identify trends or shifts in practices during the emergency.
Policy environment	Review existing IYCF-related policies and guidelines, both pre-crisis and during past emergencies, to understand how these might support or present challenges to IYCF-E.
IYCF services and capacity	Assess the availability and effectiveness of previous IYCF services and the capacity of current systems. This includes understanding gaps in service delivery and staff capacity from past data.
Coordination	Examine past coordination efforts in similar emergencies to identify successful strategies and potential challenges. Use this to strengthen current coordination mechanisms, including multi-sectoral collaboration.

What are the main sources of secondary data in IYCF-E assessments?

- National surveys: Sources include Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)
- Program reports: Reports from UNICEF, WFP, NGOs, and gov agencies programs and services
- Health Management Information Systems (HMIS): Data from DHIS2 or similar systems
- Humanitarian situation reports: Reports from OCHA and other humanitarian agencies
- News and media reports: Local and international news provide timely information on the ground realities- useful for real-time updates

What are the steps in conducting secondary data analysis?

Step 1 — Determine information needs

Step 2 — Create an information worksheet

Step 3 — Identify relevant data sources

Step 4 — Enter and organize data into the worksheet

Step 5 — Assess data quality and relevance.

Step 6 — Identify information gaps.

Step 7 — Plan on next steps

Step 8 — Develop a plan for further assessment

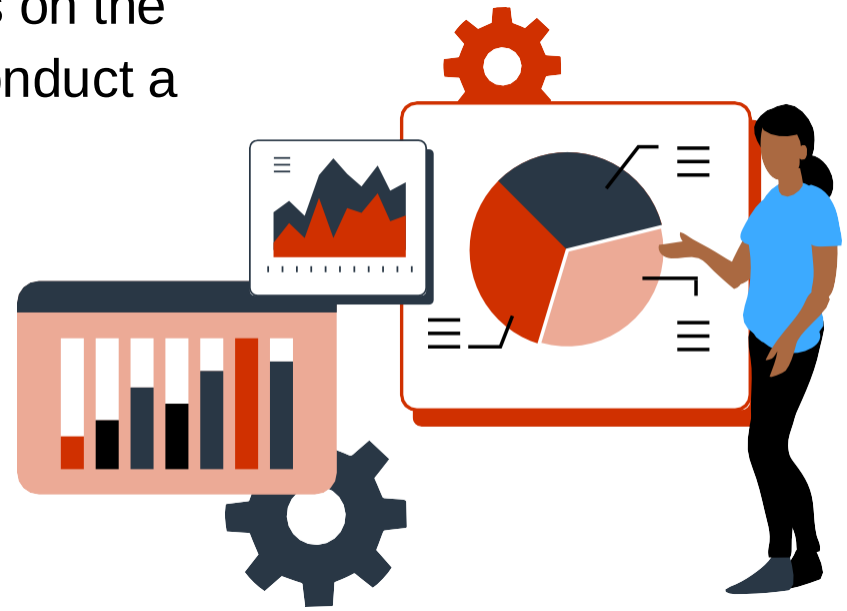
IYCF Secondary Data Worksheet

		Quantitative sources/most recent survey			Other data sources				
Category	Sub-theme	Finding / Current Situation	Source and date	Location	Finding / current situation (source and date)	Source and date	Location	Challenges / barriers to good practice	Enablers / opportunities
General Context									
IYCF Status and Practices									
Policy Environment									
IYCF Services and Capacity									
Coordination									

Group work

On 14 May 2023, Tropical Cyclone Mocha struck Myanmar, also affecting parts of Bangladesh. At one point during its path, it became one of the most powerful cyclones ever recorded in the Bay of Bengal. In response, large-scale evacuations were carried out in advance of its arrival, and many people stayed in makeshift shelters for many weeks.

You have been asked to conduct a secondary data analysis on the general context and feeding of children under 6 months. Conduct a Google search to find information for the analysis. Some suggested sources of data are: DHS survey, Global Nutrition Report Country Profile Myanmar, UNICEF and WFP Sitreps, news reports and photos.



Module 2

Rapid Assessments

What are Rapid Assessments?

Rapid assessments are quick, focused assessments conducted in emergency settings to gather essential information on IYCF-E practices and the overall situation. These assessments are designed to provide a snapshot of the current context, enabling emergency responders to make immediate, informed decisions.

Key focus areas: Feeding practices, child nutrition, caregiver conditions and the overall emergency context

Data sources: Field observations, interviews with caregivers, brief surveys, health and nutrition reports and situational assessments from emergency responders

Why are they used?

- To get an **initial understanding** of the situation to inform urgent response actions
- To **identify and prioritize** resource needs and distribution
- **Identifying** vulnerable populations
- To **provide data** that supports the need for emergency funding
- To engage with affected communities and **understand their specific needs** and preferences

Pros and cons of rapid assessments

Pros

- Quick and timely
- Identifies and prioritizes the most urgent needs, guiding the allocation of resources
- Provides data that can be used to justify the need for emergency funding
- Community engagement at the early stage of the response

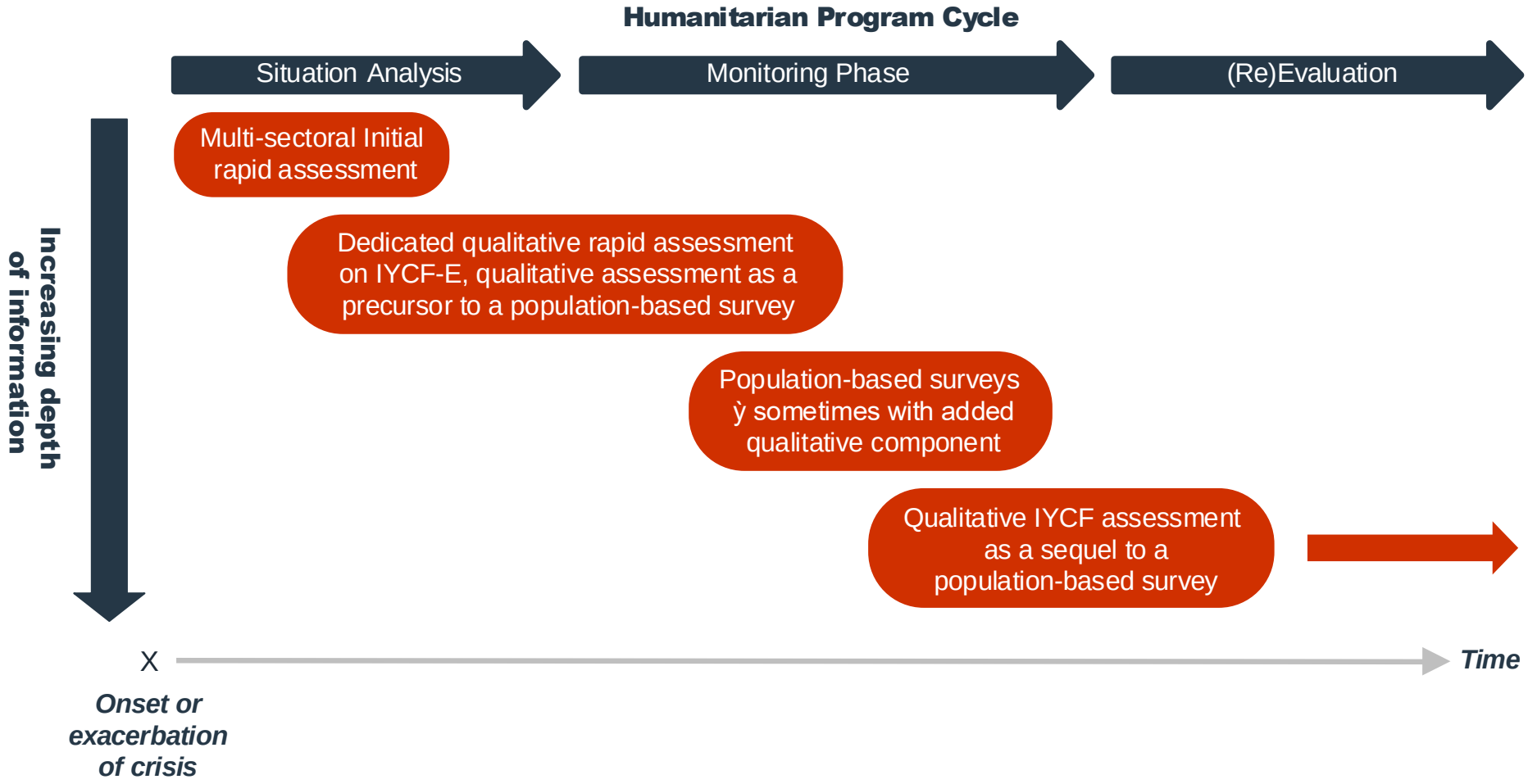
Cons

- Limited scope and detail
- Findings not generalizable/ statistically representative
- Potential for inaccuracy
- Risk of overlooking vulnerable groups
- Short-term focus

What techniques are used for rapid assessments?

- **Household questionnaire**: Used to collect essential info from accessible, willing households for quick planning.
- **Observational methods**: Teams observe and document key community issues directly.
- **Key informant interviews**: Short interviews with community leaders for critical insights.
- **Focus group discussions**: Small group talks to gather collective views on urgent concerns.

Example sequence of rapid assessments



Module 3

In-depth Qualitative Assessments

What are qualitative assessments?

The term “qualitative methods” is used to describe a number of techniques including focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observational studies, among others.

They are usually **text-based** rather than numbers-based.

They collect **information on people’s lived experience**, rather than measure coverage of practices, knowledge or services in the general population.

Key focus areas: Lived experiences, beliefs, behaviors and social dynamics

Data sources: Focus group discussions, key informant interviews, observational studies and other qualitative techniques

Open questions

- What are the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods?
- Can you think of an issue that you would use qualitative assessments to explore?

Why are qualitative methods used?

- To get a **deeper understanding** about social, cultural and environmental factors that influence ICYF
- To explore issues related to **perspectives, behaviors and motivations**
- To explore questions related to **“why”** rather than “what”
- To have the flexibility to explore issues that may not have been considered by the assessment team

Pros and cons of qualitative assessments

Pros

- Explores issues that cannot be understood using quantitative approaches
- Can be used to explore a breadth and depth of topics
- Are flexible in their approach and can be used to explore unexpected issues

Cons

- Can be time consuming
- Findings not generalizable to the wider population
- Quality information is dependent on skills of the data collector(s)

Define Aims and Objectives

Aims outline the broader goals or desired outcomes of the assessment.

Objectives are specific, measurable steps that help you accomplish these aims.

EXERCISE

Can you define one *aim* and *objectives* for an assessment related to IYCF practices?

Data collection methods

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KIIs)

- Usually 1:1 interviews
- Informants are chosen based on their expertise, position or experience related to the research topic.
- May include community leaders, professionals, policy-makers or other individuals with relevant knowledge.
- Key informant interviews can be used for sensitive or confidential topics.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs)

- Typically involve 6–12 participants.
- Participants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research topic.
- Aim to represent a range of perspectives.
- Used for homogenous groups with different characteristics.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

- Based on observing people in a natural environment.
- Based on observations, rather than dialogue.
- Good for observing, e.g., how a caregiver prepares food for a child.

Determining participant groups

EXERCISE

Which data collection methods and participant groups would you select for the following aim and objectives:

To understand current practices, perceptions, and barriers related to IYCF practices.

Determining the sampling strategy

More urgency
fewer resources
lower access
lower level of expertise

More limitations on methods

Less urgency
more resources
more access
more expertise

Less limitation on methods

- Increase chances of reaching saturation with smaller sample by observing a directive data collection, homogenous sample, focused study, straightforward aim, and less varied focus
- In some cases, it is not possible to reach saturation point. Incomplete data can be updated later.
- If FGDs with the general population are not possible, conduct KIIs with technical experts to. Does not substitute for FGDs with the general population but still gives important results.
- When situation stabilizes, samples should be larger.

Sampling

- **Purposive sampling** is usually used for qualitative assessments. Participants are selected because they are most likely to provide the information we want to collect.
- **Convenience sampling** is used in contexts with fewer resources and access challenges. Participants are selected based on their availability and accessibility.

*For qualitative samples, **it is not possible to give a sample size formula** as with quantitative data. Data saturation happens where no new information is coming from your interviews. As a guide:*

2-3 FGDs will already give a lot of valuable information;

by **5-6 FGDs,** it is possible to reach saturation point.

6 KIIs will already give a lot of valuable information;

by **12 KIIs** it is possible to reach saturation point.

Developing adapting research instruments

- Interview guides, FGD guides and observation checklists are flexible tools that will help to guide your data collection.
- Depending on the skills of the data collection team, they can be more directive or less directive.
- Include open-ended questions and prompts to elicit rich, detailed responses.
- Pilot test the instruments before data collection — pay attention as to whether questions were poorly understood or terminology used was not clear.
- Iterate and refine instruments based on feedback.

Exercise - Role play

Role play: Work in pairs. One of you is the interviewer and one of you is a participant who is the father of a child under 5. You are doing a key informant interview. Role play the interview and then reflect what adjustments you would make for future interviews.

Remember: *This is a dialogue. Not all questions need to be asked in the same order, and new ones can be added if you think they should be.*

Interview guide

- What do you understand about infant and young child feeding? (Be clear on ages, whether you're referring to breastfeeding as well as solid foods, etc.)
- What are some common feeding practices for infants and young children in your community?
- Do you think it is important for fathers to be involved in infant and young child feeding?
- What do you believe are the benefits of proper feeding practices for children?
- What are the typical roles that fathers and mothers (or other female caregivers) play in childcare in your household?
- How do you and your partner share responsibilities related to childcare, such as feeding and bathing children?
- What activities do you believe are important for fathers to be involved in when caring for young children?

Reflection

Are there issues that could have been explored more deeply?

Do you need to adapt the interview guide?

Data Collection

Data Analysis

Most common qualitative analysis method in humanitarian context is **thematic analysis. Software such as Excel or Nvivo Atlas can speed up analysis.**

COMPONENT	ACTION
Develop a data management and analysis plan	• Outline procedures for transcribing, coding and interpreting qualitative data. • Use appropriate methods, such as thematic analysis, to identify key patterns, themes and insights from FGDs and KIIs.
Data familiarization	• Immerse yourself in the data by reading the transcripts through several times. Engage with the text by annotating and highlighting areas of interest.
Generate coding categories	• Begin by identifying and labeling key concepts. Codes may be descriptive (closely reflecting participants' words) or interpretive (uncovering deeper meanings). • Refine and expand codes as you delve deeper into the data.
Explore deviant cases	• Examine deviant or outlier statements that do not fit emerging patterns. • Understand the reasons for these exceptions, as they can provide deeper insights into the complexities of the issue.
Identify themes	• After coding, identify broader themes that capture significant aspects of the data. Group related codes into these themes and explore the relationships between them. Merge, split or refine themes as necessary to capture the core messages in the data. Ensure each theme is distinct and non-overlapping.

Assuring Quality in Qualitative Assessments

VALIDITY OF FINDINGS

- **Triangulation:** Cross-check findings from different methods or sources to ensure consistency.
- **Participant validation:** Share preliminary results with participants to confirm accuracy.
- **Detailed documentation:** Keep thorough records of sampling, data collection and analysis for transparency.
- **Acknowledge biases:** Identify and mitigate biases in the team and methodology.

RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS

- **New information:** Prioritize findings that offer novel insights for IYCF-E programming.
- **Confirming suspicions:** Relevant if findings reinforce existing knowledge, aiding decisions.
- **Application to programming:** Focus on findings that directly inform program design and implementation.

Module 4

Quantitative Assessments

What are population-based representative surveys?

Population-based representative surveys are a structured process to collect numerical data on key IYCF indicators.

Data sources: IYCF indicators (e.g., EBF - exclusive breastfeeding; ISSF - introduction of solid, semi-solid, or soft foods, and others) in standalone or broader surveys like SMART nutrition surveys.

Objectives of IYCF-E Quantitative Surveys

1. Gather robust and representative IYCF data for emergency response.
2. Ensure comparability and impartiality of collected data.
3. Monitor changes in feeding practices (baseline/endline assessments).

Steps to implement an IYCF-E Quantitative Survey

Step 1 — Determine whether you need to conduct a quantitative IYCF-E survey.

Step 2 — Determine the objective of your survey

Step 3 — Identify the geographic scope of your survey.

Step 4 — Decide what IYCF-E quantitative indicators to collect.

Step 5 — Decide if you will nest your survey questions within a planned survey or conduct a standalone survey.

Step 6 — Adapt the survey questionnaire and data collection tools to the specific context and cultural setting

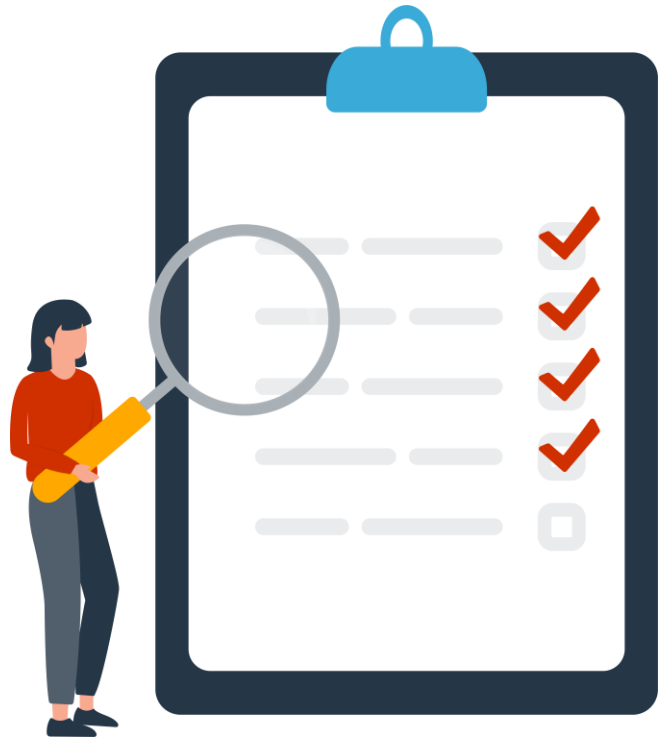
Deciding on the Survey Type

SCENARIO A. Standalone Surveys:

- Tailored for precise IYCF data collection
- **Advantages:** High flexibility and quality
- **Disadvantages:** Expensive and time-consuming

SCENARIO B. Nested Surveys (e.g., with SMART):

- Economical and faster implementation
- Less control over sample size and depth of data



Sampling Methodologies and Sample Size Calculations for Standalone Surveys

- **Calculating sample size of children 0–23 months:** We are trying to achieve at least 10% precision for EBF indicator, which requires about 400 children 0–23 months if EBF expected prevalence is close to 50% (25–75%), and only 280 children 0–23 months if expected EBF prevalence is low (<25%) or high (>75%).
- **Converting child sample sizes to households based on local demographics.** Use the calculator sheet provided.

Sampling Strategies: Cluster sampling, simple and systemic random sampling

Practical choices for sampling:

1. **Cluster sampling:** If your sample size of households calculated is reasonably small (<1,000º–1,500), consider doing a normal cluster survey.
2. **Simple and systematic random sampling:** If the sample size is too large and logistically unfeasible in emergencies (>1,000–1,500), your only option is to find lists of households with children under two and sample randomly from these lists. For example, you might look at lists of displaced or lists of registered for humanitarian assistance.

Sample Size Calculations for Nested Surveys

- Use the complete IYCF questionnaire and ensure all IYCF indicators in the report are presented with sample sizes and confidence intervals.
- If some indicators have CI wider than +/-15%, they should be marked as unreliable (too imprecise) to be used for action.

AGE RANGE	INDICATORS
0-23 months	**EvBF** – Ever Breastfed 0–23 months.
	EIBF – Early Initiation of Breastfeeding 0–23 months.
	BoF – Bottle feeding 0–23 months.
6-23 months	**MMF** – Minimum Meal Frequency 6-23 months.
	MDD – Minimum Dietary Diversity 623 months.
	MAD – Minimum Acceptable Diet 6–23 months.
	MMFF – Minimum milk feeding frequency for non-breastfed children 6–23 months.
	EFF – Egg and/or flesh food consumption 6–23 months.
	SwB – Sweet Beverage consumption 6–23 months.
	UFC – Unhealthy Food Consumption 6–23 months.
	ZVF – Zero vegetable or fruit consumption 6–23 months.
12-23 months	**CBF** – Continued Breastfeeding 12–23 months.
0-5 months	**EBF** – Exclusive Breastfeeding under six months.
	MixMF – Mixed milk feeding under six months.
6-8 months	**ISSSF** – Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods 6–8 months.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION 1

What is the primary objective of calculating sample size in an IYCF-E quantitative survey?

a. To reduce the cost and time required for data collection

b. To ensure that the sample accurately represents the infant and young children population for reliable estimates

c. To focus only on urban populations and avoid remote areas

d. To collect data from as many households as possible, regardless of population representation

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION 2

Which of the following best describes cluster sampling in the context of IYCF-E surveys?

a. A method where the population is divided into clusters, some clusters are randomly selected, and then individuals within those clusters are randomly chosen.

b. A method that targets only high-density population areas to reduce logistical challenges.

c. A method that exclusively uses lists of individuals for random selection from the entire population.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION 3

What is the recommended minimum sample size for estimating the prevalence of Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) if the expected prevalence is around 50%?

a. 200 children

b. 280 children

c. 400 children

d. 800 children

Module 5

Using Program Data to Assess and Monitor IYCF Practices

What does program data on IYCF refer to?

- Program data on IYCF comes from various sources like private, governmental and NGO-run nutrition and health programs. It refers to the collection, analysis and use of information regarding the feeding practices, nutritional status and related health outcomes of infants and young children, typically from birth to two years old.
- The data on IYCF can also include information generated by other relevant programs in sectors such as health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); protection; and food security, which have a direct link to infant and young child feeding.

What are the objectives of using data on IYCF from programs?

The objectives of using IYCF data from programs are as follows:

- Assess and monitor IYCF practices in humanitarian and fragile contexts.
- Identify gaps in service delivery related to IYCF practices.
- Inform policy and program improvements aimed at enhancing IYCF practices.

How comprehensive is the IYCF data from programs?

While monitoring program data is valuable, it is important to recognize its limitations.

- Program data may not represent the entire population, as it only reflects the situation of program participants. For example, it might miss the poorest or those living in remote areas and overestimate the sick. If the program doesn't cover certain groups, it may miss important insights about their needs, which limits our understanding of the broader community.
- Inconsistencies in indicator definitions, data collection, recording and reporting across programs and locations can make data standardization and comparison difficult.
- Program data may not always be accessible or up-to-date, or they may be collected over long periods of time, potentially leading to reviewing information that is outdated or comparing data from different in time.

Types of program data on IYCF

Program data on IYCF can be categorized into several types based on specific sectors:

- **Nutrition Programs:**
  - Breastfeeding practices (e.g., exclusive breastfeeding, continued breastfeeding at 1 and 2 years) and complementary feeding practices (e.g., introduction of solid foods, minimum dietary diversity)
  - Donations and distribution of infant feeding products
- **Health Programs:**
  - Access to health services for children under age two and their caregivers
  - Availability of psychosocial support
  - Maternal counseling on IYCF
- WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Programs:
  - Access to clean water for drinking and food preparation
  - Sanitation facilities
  - Handwashing practices
- **Food Security Programs:**
  - Availability of nutrient-rich foods in markets
  - Access to fuel and equipment for food preparation
- **Protection Programs:**
- Risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violence among children and caregivers
- Child-caregiver separation cases

QUIZ: QUESTION 1

What is the primary purpose of collecting program data on IYCF (Infant and Young Child Feeding)?

a. To monitor the stock levels of infant formula in markets.

b. To assess and monitor IYCF practices, identify service delivery gaps, and inform policy and program improvements.

c. To evaluate only the breastfeeding rates in rural areas.

d. To provide detailed financial reports for IYCF programs.

QUIZ: QUESTION 2

What is one of the limitations of using program data for assessing IYCF practices?

a. Program data covers the entire population, making it fully representative.

b. Program data is always up-to-date and standardized across different regions.

c. Program data may not include the most vulnerable populations and can vary in data collection methods, limiting its comprehensiveness.

d. Program data only focuses on water access, excluding nutritional aspects.

QUIZ: QUESTION 3

Which of the following is NOT a type of program data related to IYCF?

a. Breastfeeding practices and complementary feeding indicators.

b. Handwashing practices and access to sanitation facilities.

c. Market price monitoring and availability of nutrient-rich foods.

d. Historical dietary patterns of adults.

Module 6

Data to Decisions: Synthesizing and Analyzing Assessment Results

Why do we synthesize and analyze the results?

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and changes in IYCF practices.
- Understand the current situation and identify themes across different data sources.
- Identify challenges surrounding IYCF practices and opportunities for support.
- Guide advocacy and prioritize interventions aimed at protecting and improving IYCF practices in emergency contexts.

What are the steps to synthesizing and analyzing the results?

1. Compile data into an information matrix.
2. Triangulate findings to corroborate or identify discrepancies.
3. Summarize key indicators, challenges and enablers.
4. Evaluate service delivery and policy readiness.
5. Identify priority areas for intervention and policy change.
6. Develop evidence-based recommendations for action.

Synthesizing /combining the results using a matrix

Organize and Combine Findings
Use the IYCF Analysis Worksheet to synthesize data from multiple assessments.

Key Elements:

- Define the IYCF category
- Identify specific sub-themes.
- Summarize current findings and trends over time.
- Outline socio-cultural, infrastructural or knowledge-related challenges.
- Highlight enablers such as community strengths and available resources.
- Cross-compare data sources and note any discrepancies for further analysis.

Here is an example of the completed matrix

CATEGORY	SUB-THEME	SITUATION AND TREND	BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED	TRIANGULATION (ANY DISCREPANCIES OR OPPOSING FINDINGS?)
IYCF practices in Infants under 6 months	Exclusive Breastfeeding	Some women report EBF, others switching to mixed feeding since the emergency.	Challenges with milk supply	High CHW coverage willing to support breastfeeding counselling	Discrepancy: Some reports of EBF vs. mixed feeding trends.
	Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (EIBF)	Delayed initiation of breastfeeding due to cultural practices. Lack of support for breastfeeding immediately after birth.	Cultural norms of throwing away colostrum. Lack of support for breastfeeding immediately after birth.	High rates of institutional delivery	None detected
IYCF practices in children 6–59 months	Minimum Meal Frequency 6–23 Months (MMF)	Inconsistent feeding frequency due to caregiver workload. Lack of knowledge on recommended feeding frequencies.	Train families on how to keep consistent meal times.		None detected
	Minimum Dietary Diversity (6–23m)	Limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.	Geographic remoteness. High cost of nutritious foods.	Functional market with local traders	Market surveys show high prices of fresh foods, while community leaders report that prices are

Interpreting the information matrix

1. **Conduct initial review.**
2. **Analyze current situation.** Examine the situation for each theme to understand the current status of IYCF in the location. Look for and highlight patterns or significant findings, such as areas with particularly low breastfeeding rates or poor diet (in terms of frequency, diversity, etc.).
3. **Assess enablers and opportunities.**
4. **Evaluate trends.**
5. **Consider data quality and relevance.** Evaluate the comments on data relevance and quality. Highlight any gaps or uncertainties in the data that may affect decision-making.
6. **Formulate initial recommendations.** Based on the analysis, develop actionable recommendations to address the identified barriers and leverage the opportunities. These recommendations should be specific, practical and aimed at improving IYCF practices.

Conduct a Stakeholder Validation and Action Planning Workshop

- Validating findings with the government leads for nutrition and related sectors is essential to ensure agreement with the findings and for actions to be taken.
- To validate findings, support the government to conduct a workshop with focal points as well as other key stakeholders, UN agencies and NGOs. Where possible, include community members, health workers and policymakers in the process.
- Action plan template based on analysis results:

WHAT	WHO	BY WHEN	MILESTONES	COMMENTS

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Thank You!

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